



## *A Beginners Guide to Bare Philanthropy*

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A Beginners Guide:

Laying the Foundation

Thank you so much for purchasing this eBook. I am willing to bet you are just starting out on your journey to change your surroundings and leave your mark on this world. This is a very exciting and scary venture all at the same time, isn't it? I also understand that there is so much information out there for you that is technical, mind boggling, and quite frankly way too formal for your taste. After much research, I began to think about the organizations that are not already established with employees and that are brand new. Where can they go to learn how to make their organization grow? What about the ones that have zero resources and will thank their lucky stars just to be able to keep it between the navigational beacons this year? I have never personally known Philanthropy to be shiny. Starting a nonprofit organization is anything but

polished and shiny. Its dirty, it keeps you up at night, its bloody, its sweaty, its tears, it is using a pocket knife to cut down a tree, and it's worth it. There are the reasons why I call it "Bare" and why I am doing what I am doing.

My mission is to guide you, step by step, through a process that seems so elusive to quite a few and show you the simplest way to achieve your goal using grassroots techniques.

But, you are going to have to meet me halfway. I cannot help you if you are not willing to help yourself.

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Sarah Childers and I have been involved in this subjective world of philanthropy for over 16 years now. I stumbled across it by sheer accident while completing my internship in college. My professors had thrown me in with the local chapter of the Red Cross and Humane Society and I have been hooked ever since. I have served as a consultant to nonprofit entities, performed grant writing/technical writing duties for various other institutions, and even started nonprofit organizations by only using air and duct tape as my only tools. I have also served as a peer reviewer for the USDE Office of Innovation and Improvement. My track record to date has been

procuring over 1 million for various entities in the last three years as a grant writer. I also know what it is like to be emotionally attached to your cause and what it feels like when it ages you. I know EXACTLY what you are going through and I am here to help you.

You can contact me with any questions you may have in your process through my website:

[www.BarePhilanthropy.com](http://www.BarePhilanthropy.com) ,and I will do my best to thoroughly answer them.

I commend you for making a difference in your community and I want you to know that this process is going to be grueling, maddening, and one of the most rewarding things you are going to have the privilege to partake in. Over the years, I have found that one silver bullet will not solve every dilemma. Nor will you find that everyone will agree on the same solution to a problem. So, keep that in mind. In addition, I want you to know that there are a few hard and fast rules that will pertain to what you are trying to do, but for the most part, all of it is seriously subjective and shifts on a nightly basis (I'm not kidding.) I find that is because human beings themselves cannot be defined by just a few set of rules and when you are dealing with these dynamics,

you are dealing with every type of personality and scenario under the sun.

So, in this eBook, I am going to explain a few basics to assist you in getting started. Maybe you just had your organization declared a nonprofit by the IRS or you are in the process of submitting you paperwork. Either way, you will need the information contained here. Ok, so here we go.....

### **Common Misconceptions I Am Going To Clear Up**

Before we go any further, here are a few misconceptions I want to get out of the way first before we continue hopping down our bunny trail:

1. Finding your large donors is going to be like trying to find a needle in a haystack. I define large donors as the ones contributing over \$5000 annually. This is usually done via a grant proposal to a private foundation that you will submit (There are three ways you will procure funds. More on that later.) There are so many steps you will need to take before you can even get to the part where an organization hands you a check and everyone working on this project needs to be 100% vested in the process. For those of

you that need assistance creating a winning grant proposal, I also wrote another book that pertains to what has worked in the past for me. It is called, "The Unwritten Art of Finding Grant Funds." It is for sale on my products page and pertains to procuring funds in the private sector. When you begin your solicitation process, be alright with the fact that you will receive 30 "no"s before you receive one "maybe" during your quest for funds. It is completely maddening and you have to be focused and persistent. In the past, I have always kept my rejections letters to line the birdcage or use as puppy pads. Hey, it saves me money and I get to recycle so win, win! Be forewarned though, this process of finding funds for a particular program can also take time. Sometimes, I can solicit an entity and I don't even hear a response from them for 6 months. Make sure that you and your Board/Team members avoid burnout in the meantime. Also, even if you do find a main funder, your program or mission may have changed by that time and it may need to be modified. This leads me to my next point.....

2. He who has the gold, makes the rules and it will buy you a first class ticket to the crazy train at times. This means that if a large donor does not like a part of the program and still wants to fund you, they will make you change it to their specifications before funding. Which is all fine and dandy unless they are just funding a portion of the program which is very common. Then, what happens when you finally secure another large funder for the other half, but they want you to change something else up that the first funder was okay with? See what I mean? Choo Choo! All aboard! Don't worry, as long as communication is open, this can be remedied. Not fun, but remedied none the less. In time, you will learn how to troubleshoot all of the daunting things with the precision of a race car pit crew and it will become second nature to you as you grow with this process. Communication will be a key ingredient in building solid relationships with your donors in the long run.

3. Just because you obtain/have a nonprofit status from the IRS for your organization,

does not mean money will fall from the sky to fund your every whim. I know, I was really disappointed too when I realized this. I prepared for months for that particular day of raining moolah. I patiently waited and nothing ever happened. Not one coin fell down from the heavens to my dismay. It took a few hours to gather up all the buckets I put out hoping to cash in on that highly anticipated occasion. The deposit I had on the bulldozer rental to gather up money from the ground was nonrefundable too.

4. There are differences between public and private grant funding and you will have to utilize and build on both. Keep in mind that the nonprofit sector utilizes quite a bit from the business sector. Think of it as your reflection in a mirror. The actual you is the business, and your reflection is the nonprofit. It looks the same, but it has differences. Get it? One of the things you will need to utilize from the business sector is a business model. You will then use the three methods of securing funds via Public Grants, Private Grants, and Fundraising as building blocks for that model. Public grants are funded by tax dollars and are issued



through governmental agencies like the USDE. They are technical, long winded, dry, bureaucratic, and I hate them. These are the ones that drive me to stand over my computer at night screaming expletives while waving a baseball bat. Private grants are funded through private foundations via private money. This is basically money that someone has made in their lifetime and set aside to make a difference in areas they feel needs assistance and a private foundation's guidelines can vary. Each private foundation has its own board of directors, set of rules, and paradigm. You will have to research quite a bit to see if you even qualify for them to grant you anything. The upside to this is you get real, breathing humans on the other end of the phone line when you hit a bump in the road. Most of them are awesome to work with. Some of them....not so awesome and will not hesitate to tell you to go play in the traffic. So, you need to get used to being told that too among other things. A third method of funding is soliciting donations by good old fashioned pavement pounding. This can be done a million different ways and it is referred to as "Fundraisers," or "Campaigns." One method that is

commonly practiced these days is “content marketing,” that is done online to “raise awareness.” This in itself is a craft to be mastered and I highly suggest doing thorough research to learn as much as you can about this. There are classes for this type of thing and it evolves with technology. I have some of my favorite companies listed on my products page that you can view that I think will be budget friendly. Sign up for something that strikes your fancy and listen to what they have to say. I cannot stress this enough. With the ability to reach out all over the world, an online campaign can be the bread and butter of your organization.

5. Very rarely will there ever be grant funds available to individuals (this pertains to the United States). This last one drives me bonkers when it comes up in conversation. No, there are not a whole plethora of things you can apply for at all hours of the day that is going to suit your needs. So PLEASE stop referencing those dang infomercials you watched at 3AM! Sometimes there may be a grant from the public sector that pertains to what you want or need and you will have to look or wait for it to become available. But, I

can tell you with great certainty that 99.999999% of the time, it has to do with furthering your education. Not your home or business. Yes, there are business grants available (they are rare) however they all revolve around an idea that is cutting edge or will benefit a large amount of people in the end. Such as using your business model as a test tube in order to implement a method on a larger scale at some time. So, if you are the owner of an already established business, you are going to have a better chance at milking a bull than obtaining grant money to keep your business afloat or pay off your back taxes. So, don't let someone fool you into this, it is a scam. This realm is also full of some serious tricksters that I have had to spend time cleaning up after and their aftermath is not pretty. They can sink an already struggling entity, and it has turned me into a fire breathing dragon at times. This is what I am getting at : You will rarely find any entity that is going to pay off debts for another entity out of the goodness of their hearts, give for the sake of giving to an individual, or bail you out of a financial disaster. You are not going to get a check because you are sitting there looking

all cute and fluffy. So, please get that notion out of your head. On another note, if anyone does know of an ongoing source that actually DOES what I just stated previously, do hook a sister up. Since we are at it, momma needs an in ground pool, a new blender, some flip flops, a big bottle of sun tanning oil, and a few more dollars for that purse I have been eyeballing. But until that rainbow appears with the pot of gold that everyone visualizes when the word “grant” is spoken, please stop asking about it.

I want you to understand this: In the event grants are given, they are to increase/improve the idea of something and bring it into fruition. There are always strings attached be it blood, sweat, and tears or matching funds that you will need to come up with. Resistance is what progression is made up of. You cannot grow by staying in one place. Yes, getting to the next level will take a bit of extra work and let's face it, this process is not for everyone and this will be survival of the fittest.

Now, onto the next one.....

Have you established what your need is yet? Do you have any idea as to how you get to that point?

Needs vs wants has been a human dilemma since the beginning of time. Most often than not, we feel that something we want is something we need and vice versa. As I type this, I need to go sit in a time out chair in the sand somewhere watching the sun set in the horizon over the water. If I don't get to sit in my chair in the sand, will life cease as I know it? Probably not, but soaking in some Vitamin D would really sooth my soul about right now. I am one of those individuals that will define a need as something that keeps an individual alive and well, mentally and physically. The dictionary gives another definition that a need is something required or wanted; a requisite. I don't know about you, but that is a seriously relative and subjective definition.

Be as that may, all of the basic necessities of what keeps me alive and well are already within my reach. I just finished cleaning up the kitchen after making the family taco soup for supper. The last time I checked, I was breathing in good old fashioned oxygen. I have a home, clean clothes, and a place to lay my head. I would say compared to most, I am doing pretty dang good.

The reason why I bring this topic up is that I want you to seriously think through what you are planning to do with this new nonprofit organization you are creating. Here lately, when I can fit it into

my schedule, I also work as a consultant for new nonprofit organizations and I find it extremely rewarding. One of the most daunting topics that come up in the middle of discussions at meetings is how to meet the needs of a community. Since I am not usually from that particular area and I am not familiar with the personal dynamics at work, I will tell people to name what they feel is a need while I keep my mouth shut by eating a doughnut. Hands will go up immediately and I hear replies such as “a program for to help kids,” or “such and such building to be renovated and turned into a community center.”

With a blessed doughnut in one hand, and a pen in the other, I will start scribbling as I start asking questions. I want everyone to audibly think through what they are planning and see it on paper. When everyone is finished, I will then inquire as to why they feel whatever it is that they stated, is in fact, a need. You will be very surprised to see what happens when ideas make it to paper and how everything then takes shape when you start getting into nitty gritty details. Everything will begin to take shape and it usually looks much different than what was thought of, especially when multiple people are collaborating on it. However, you need to be a bit more organized.

Once you agree on what it is that you truly want to do, this will be called your mission. Then, you need to break it down even further. Once you have a mission, you need to create goals and a timeline for each goal in order to fulfill the stated mission. This will keep you from running in circles in the future. As a rule of thumb, I tell other to focus on 3 goals a year to fulfill their mission. This is an adequate starting point. Whittle it down to your top three things.

Then its time.....

I am assuming that you are officially at the point that you have identified your need and now have a plan in place to fill that need. You have searched high and low for individuals just as crazy as yourself that feel this mission is important and they are ready to rock it out. Welcome to the dark side ;) Let's get started.

You need to consult with a certified professional to get the necessary paperwork in place.

Laws vary from state to state as to how those are set up and you will need to consult with a CPA. I am sure once you tell them what you are doing; they will gladly walk you through the process of what needs to be done, free of charge or for a reduced fee.

Get used to asking for free or reduced charge from vendors to keep your overhead costs down. I have vendors listed on my products page that will do just that for you and understand you are on a tight budget.

·Word of Advice: Wait until your organization is declared tax exempt by the IRS and you have the official letter from them in your hand.

You now have all the official paperwork in your hand and you are ready to rock it out. You need to call your first meeting and get the ball rolling. According to your by-laws, it should spell out how often you meet, how many members you have, and what happens during that meeting such as a visitors input, etc. It should spell out crystal clear what you are about and roles should be assigned to all members. Your by laws are the merit in which you will operate.

You also need to have an agenda (what you are going to talk about) for every meeting and every item on that agenda needs to be as specific as possible. Which leads me to this next topic.....

Every meeting will have a formula of simple formalities consisting of your agenda (what you want to talk about,) someone keeping notes of the



time it starts and ends, those who are attending, what was discussed (those are called the minutes,) and someone leading the meeting (usually the president or director.)

What is not included in the formalities, I am going to try my best to explain:

One huge problem that I encounter with a group of individuals that get together is that they meet with a few really vague concepts they want to discuss. Then they are there for 2 hours with not a whole lot that was accomplished except for a lot of conversation and idle gossip. I am also willing to bet that since you are reading this, you are the president of the organization or another officer and you will be leading your meeting. If you want to cover as much ground as possible in a short amount of time, my recommendation is to not only keep your agendas as specific as possible, but keep the meeting moving from item to item, and even control how input from members is given and how the conversation flows. You will not be censoring anyone, but you will basically be commanding valuable information from everyone that is needed to progress instead of the conversation veering off to discussing the next Zumba class. Does that make sense? By following this method, you will once

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